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and has been distributed by the War Department to the officers of the organized militia, 9,000 copies being printed in the first edition. It is an elementary work on the reading and construction of maps, and is fully adequate for the purposes designed. It explains and illustrates scales, contours, hachures, and other elements of map-making, gives map problems, and treats of the determination of directions, orientation of maps, determination of the true meridian, etc. While the book is designed for military classes, most of it will be very helpful to all who may desire to cultivate the reading and understanding of maps.

**The Story of the American Merchant Marine.** By John R. Spears. 340 pp. and 15 illustrations. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1910. \$1.50.

For over twenty years, Mr. Spears has been regarded as an authority on American sea enterprises. The books from his pen are based upon long study of the topics he treats. His facts are always clearly presented, his narrative is interesting and he spares no pains to attain accuracy. In the present volume, he tells the story of our merchant marine from its beginnings, through all the phases of its history and of the depression that has marked this feature of our activities since the civil war.

**Physical History of the Earth in Outline.** By James B. Babbitt. vi and 229 pp., and Appendix. Sherman, French & Company, Boston, 1909. \$1.40.

The title of the book is somewhat misleading. What the author wants to demonstrate is not so much the history of the earth in general as his particular theories on the causes and extent of the glacial period, to which the rest forms merely an introduction. His argumentation culminates in a refutation of the hypotheses of a "geologic" or "cosmic" winter and the existence of a polar ice cap as causes of the glacial period, and he substitutes for them a transverse rotation of the earth which would effectuate changes in the obliquity of the earth's axis and, hence, changes in the location of the Arctic zone and climate. As it appears, from ancient as well as most accurate modern observations, that within the last thirty centuries the poles have turned or moved in a direction at right angles to the axis of the diurnal rotation, this movement may be supposed to be continuous and, if so, cycles of such a rotation would correspond to climatic cycles during which ice ages would alternate at the poles and the equator and migrate, as it were, all around the earth between these two.

In a book like this, however, which is supposed by its author to be ranked as a scientific publication, that author should not play hide-and-seek with his readers as he does here. Not only does the title-page observe the strictest discretion as to the profession, position, or general scientific qualifications of the author, but there is not even a preface to introduce him and his work to us, nor a bibliography by means of which we might assign him his place in the long line of workers on these problems, nor a subject index that might enable us to cross-examine his theories. These omissions are especially regrettable, not only because they will shake the faith of many a reader in the scientific earnestness of the author, but even more because his transverse rotation is a very near relative of another hypothesis long established by Professor Simroth of Leipzig, namely, the "Pendulation Theory," and the principal interest and merit of the book lies in the points of resemblance and divergence that it con-